

**Senate Select Committee on School Safety Hearing on
“Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity Discrimination and School Safety”**

Plummer Park- Fiesta Hall, West Hollywood

October 3, 2002

Witness Biographies

Kirk Bell is the Policy Implementation Specialist for GLSEN, a national organization whose mission is to end homophobia and heterosexism in the nation's K-12 schools. Kirk has managed GLSEN's San Francisco office since 1999. He works with local GLSEN chapters, safe schools coalitions, and other groups to ensure effective implementation of new and existing LGBT-inclusive statewide safe schools laws and local policies, and coordinates/conducts a variety of trainings for GLSEN. Prior to being hired on the staff of GLSEN, Kirk Bell started a GLSEN chapter in Seattle in 1995 and did related work in Washington State, including serving on the leadership, research, and intervention teams of the Washington Safe Schools Coalition from 1997 - 1999. Kirk has 17 years of classroom teaching experience in rural, suburban and urban schools in all grade levels, K-12, from 1981-1999. His two avocations are queer history and abstract cartographic art.

Pam Chamberlain is a senior trainer with the Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students at the Massachusetts Department of Education. She has been associated with the program since its inception in 1993. A former high school English teacher, she came out as a lesbian to her school in 1974 and has been a vocal advocate of students' rights for all youth, including members of the lgbt community, for as long as she can remember.

Progga Choudhury is the Lead Victim Advocate of the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center's Anti-Violence Project. In this role, she assists victims of homophobic, anti-transgender, and anti-HIV/AIDS related violence, threats of violence, vandalism, and harassment through crisis intervention and advocacy. She also provides education and outreach to the community about hate crime and homophobia. She has previously assisted survivors of domestic violence, hate violence, and sexual assault in San Francisco.

Barbara (Bobbie) Delbon is the KLEAR (Kids Learning Empathy and Respect) San Mateo Union High School District Coordinator. She is a retired educator who for 26 years served as an English teacher, counselor, activity director, and assistant principal. An assistant principal for 15 years, she was responsible for the discipline of about 1,000 tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students. Because of these experiences, she knows that the window of time between disrespectful language and violence is small and shrinking. Consequently, she was pleased to be asked to implement the KLEAR Program in the San Mateo Union High School District and to implement “Mutual Trust and Respect” assemblies in its seven high schools in 2000-2001 as a precursor to launching the KLEAR Program. A licensed marriage family therapist and a member of the San Mateo County Commission on the Status of Women for five years, she coordinated and implemented “Hear Me Roar,” an annual all day Saturday event for the past two years for all high school young women in San Mateo County.

Teri Shugart Erickson, along with her husband, Bob, is the parent of two children in public school in California (Carly, age 13, and Mitchell, age 11). She is also a corporate attorney, working primarily as in-house counsel for Al Shugart International, a start-up resource company. Teri also serves as an adjunct lecturer at Santa Clara School of Law. Teri's experience as an advocate for her gender non-conforming son led her to be active in GLSEN Peninsula/South Bay, formerly serving as Co-Chair and now as Legislative/Political Action Chair. She is the author of "Honoring Gender Differences in Children" (Open Hands, V13, No. 1, 1997) and "Sexual Orientation, Our Children and the Law" (GLSEN publication 2000).

Kate Frankfurt currently serves as a consultant in the Children's Rights Division of Human Rights Watch. She earned a Master's Degree in Social Work from Hunter College in 1991 and completed a two-year post-graduate externship in family therapy at the Ackerman Institute in 1994. Beginning with her work with addicts in residential drug treatment in the South Bronx, she has developed programs to address the needs of gay and lesbian youth, people with AIDS and their families, low-income minority youth, survivors of childhood sexual abuse and domestic violence and people transitioning from long-term drug treatment to mainstream society. She has served as director of advocacy and public policy at the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network and participated in policy and informational meetings with members of Congress, White House staff and representatives from the U.S. Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, Education and the Centers for Disease Control.

Duran Hernandez graduated from Buchanan High School in Clovis, in 2002. He experienced harassment in school because people perceived him to be gay. His efforts to improve his school climate were met with resistance from administrators and teachers.

Nikira Hernandez is a junior at Santa Cruz High School where she has experienced a positive and supportive school environment. She is actively involved as the president of her school's gay-straight alliance. Nikira is also on two national student leadership teams, including the Day of Silence National Student Leadership Team. She hopes that by continuing her work she can make the world a place in which anyone can grow up equally in the eyes of their peers regardless of their sexuality.

Karen Humphrey joined the California Department of Education (CDE) in December, 1996 as Senior Advisor in the office of the Superintendent; later, worked on interagency collaborative projects, and administered federally-funded career-technical education gender equity programs. As Administrator of the Office of Workforce Development, she is responsible for connecting education agencies with implementation of the federal Workforce Investment Act; educational gender equity and equity for special populations in career-technical education, and related secondary and career-technical educational issues. She also represents State Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin on the California Commission on the Status of Women. Prior to joining CDE, Humphrey had a multi-faceted career, including 12 years as a television reporter and 12 years in local government, where she served two terms as Councilmember and one term as the first woman Mayor of Fresno.

Carolyn Laub is the Founder and Executive Director of Gay-Straight Alliance Network (GSA Network), a youth-led organization that empowers youth to fight discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity in schools. Since 1998, Carolyn has expanded the network of Gay-Straight Alliance clubs in California from 40 to over 275 clubs. Carolyn was a leader of the grassroots youth effort to pass the California Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000 (AB 537). In 2001, Carolyn served on the California State Superintendent's AB 537 Advisory Task Force. She currently co-chairs the California Safe Schools Coalition. In 1997, Carolyn founded and directed a community support group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQQ) youth. Previously, she has directed a youth HIV prevention education program and has published research documenting the link between gender ideologies and adolescent sexual risk-taking behavior.

Alyn Libman is a senior at North Hollywood High School who identifies as female-to-male transgender. He founded the Gay-Straight Alliance club his sophomore year and has been president of his GSA for 2 years. He is currently the California State Student Organizer for the Day of Silence Project, the co-chair of the Caprice Young School Board Committee on LGBT Issues, and a member of GSA Network's Youth Council. His interests include figure skating, weight lifting, politics, music, and theater. Someday, he would like to be a lawyer to further the rights of LGBT individuals and help those who are currently under-represented in our legal system.

Ernie McCray is a retired educator who served the San Diego Unified School District 37 years as a teacher, vice-principal, and a principal of schools from elementary through high school (28 years). Presently Ernie teaches playwriting and helps teachers use drama in their classrooms. As a father, grandfather, great-grandfather, husband, educator, community activist, writer, and actor, Ernie rises everyday to do all that he can to make the world a better place.

Shannon Minter is the Legal Director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights. He joined NCLR in 1993, when he received an Equal Justice Fellowship from the National Association of Public Interest Law to initiate the first nationwide legal program for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth. Minter is the author of numerous publications on LGBT youth and has litigated precedent-setting cases on the issues of anti-gay peer harassment and gay/straight alliances. He has taught as an adjunct professor or lecturer at Stanford University School of Law, Golden Gate Law School, and Santa Clara Law School. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the Horizons Foundation in San Francisco, and on the International Advisory Board of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.

Deanne Neiman is the Director of the Educational Equity Compliance Office of the Los Angeles Unified School District. Under the auspices of the District's General Counsel Office, the Director and the Educational Equity Compliance Office act to assist the District in complying with laws and regulations enforced by state and federal agencies. In the Position of Director since 1995, Ms. Neiman has been and continues to be responsible for addressing and responding to discrimination/harassment issues and concerns that affect District students. Further, acting as the District's Title IX Coordinator, Ms. Neiman has been instrumental in coordinating the District's efforts to protect students from sex, sexual orientation and gender discrimination, including sexual harassment. Ms. Neiman has directed the District's efforts with regard to compliance with nondiscrimination laws for over a decade and has seen the concept of Educational Equity evolve over those years.

Peter Simack is entering his seventh year as a special education principal with Marchus School and the Contra Costa Office of Education in Pleasant Hill, CA. The Marchus School is a K-12 program that serves the needs of emotionally disturbed students from throughout the county. Peter has 25 years experience working with at-risk and special education students. He also serves on the Contra Costa County "System of Care Planning and Policy Council", a collaborative agency group whose purpose is to oversee mental health program and service delivery to county youth.

Sarah Stuebner graduated from Clovis High School in 2002. She experienced ongoing verbal and physical harassment and violence in school because she is a lesbian. Even though she knew of her right to file a complaint, she never reported any of the harassment or violence she experienced for fear that her parents would find out she is a lesbian and kick her out of the house.